

than collecting mafureira or wax, or tapping trees for rubber (1). 167

Moreover the fashion of going to the *Transvaal* mines, to earn money, has become so universal that a Thonga would think he had in some sort failed if he had not made a stay in town (shilungu). 439
There, in Johannesburg, they earn £ 3 in the mines, or £ 4—£ 5 monthly as kitchen boys ; so they despise the old primitive trading expeditions which brought less money and were attended with more danger.

These new economic conditions not only discourage Natives from trading on their own account, reducing them more and more to the condition of mere hired labourers, but are rapidly destroying their picturesque and interesting industry. For a few shillings they can buy European utensils. Their attractively carved spoons are replaced by ugly tin ones ; their wooden tumblers by less artistic enamelled ones, their primitive plates by European ware decorated in doubtful taste. Instead of the piece of reed which they wore in their ears as a snuff box, they now buy brass cartridges, and the Thonga beauties, discarding the *tihuhlu* fat, now anoint themselves with a scented oil imported from Europe. There may be certain advantages in these changes, but the picturesqueness of Bantu life promptly disappears, together with the incentive to develop their Native arts and crafts! 177 439

E: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON NATIVE INDUSTRY.

It is a strange destiny, that of these African races amongst whom the civilisation of the XIXth century has appeared, effecting the most radical changes in the minds and manners of people who, for centuries, perhaps for tens of centuries, have remained in the same primitive condition, marking time, so to speak, on the same spot, or, at most, 178

(1) There are at least two species of shrubs whose sap, when hardened, produces excellent rubber. These are fairly wide-spread and M. Dewèvre, a Belgian botanist, who has made a special study of rubber plants, and to whom I sent leaves and fruits of the trees, has classified them amongst the *Landolphia*. One is said to be a *Landolphia Petersiana*, and the other a variety of the *Landolphia Kirki* (Dyer) called by others *Landolphia Monteiroi*. Natives make an incision in the bark of the tree, and a milky sap exudes, which soon thickens and the somewhat sticky filaments are then wound 137 314

178 progressing almost imperceptibly. The transformation would seem to be as rapid as the previous immobility was fixed.

Let us try to discover the causes which may account for this extraordinary stagnation.

176 All are agreed in bearing witness to the fact that the state of civilisation
178 in which Europeans found the Bantu tribes of South Africa is of an extremely ancient date. It is true that we have but little historical data to go upon as regards the development of these people, but, nevertheless, it seems to me highly probable that the shape of their ngula, their hwama, their shirundju, their pillows, the construction of their huts, dates from a very remote antiquity, and has been handed down unchanged from generation to generation. How are we to account for this lack of development, whilst the Indo-European races, starting probably from similar primitive conditions, have advanced to so high a degree of civilisation as that of the Greeks and Romans, and ultimately to that of modern times?

The reply given by many casual observers to this question is that *the Bantu races are incapable of progress*. They are condemned, by reason of their mental and spiritual constitution, to vegetate in perpetual barbarism or to make themselves ridiculous by a servile imitation of the superior races. This view is not justified by the facts of the case. We recognise a relative mental inferiority in the Thongas, as in their congeners the Bantus, but their minds, nevertheless, possess in a more or less rudimentary state, all those faculties of which we are wont to boast. During the several years I have passed in close contact with these intellects, supposedly so limited, I have been more often struck with the points of analogy between the Africans and ourselves than by the differences which separate us. Besides, it is an error to assert that they have not progressed. Their inventive genius is fully proved by the various ways in which the several tribes have taken advantage of the materials with which Nature has supplied them. The Ba-Ronga do not make their baskets in the same way as the Zulus, or the Ba-Sutho. Again, in many separate instances, we can note a distinct forward movement in their industry; the arrival of glass beads,

137 sound small sticks. A good yield of rubber could undoubtedly be obtained in this country if the trees were cultivated and tapped in an intelligent manner.

314 (With regard to the name of the rubber tree, compare *Delagoa Bay, its Nations and Natural History*, London, Philip and Son, 1891, written by Mrs Montano, an English woman who spent several years in Lourenço Marques and published interesting observations on the country. Without claiming any great scientific accuracy, this volume affords much interesting information.)